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THERE IS NO DEATH



ARCHDEACON WILBERFORCE



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NO DEATH**

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THE THERE IS NO DEATH

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There is no Death.

THREE is no death ! What seems so is
transition.

This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life Elysian
Whose portals we call death.

Longfellow.

There is no death, the dust we tread
Shall change beneath the summer showers
To golden grain, or mellow fruit,
Or rainbow-tinted flowers.
And ever near us, though unseen,
The dear immortal spirits tread.
For all the boundless universe
Is Life. **THERE ARE NO DEAD.**

Lord Lytton.

A Prayer for one passed over.

INFINITE Father-Spirit, in Whom all whom we call "dead" do live, I commend to Thy Fatherly love and care my beloved whom Thou hast called out of the body into Higher life and experience. Grant that in that Sphere of Light and advancement all that is good and noble in *her* may be expanded and developed. Grant that anything weak and imperfect in *her* may be eliminated. Fill *her* with Thy Spirit that *she* may grow to full knowledge and love of Thee until *she* shall be made perfect, and keep *her* in close communion with me, until, in Thine own way and time, we are reunited. This I ask in the Name of Thy Perfect Manifestor, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christus Consolator.

BESIDE the dead I knelt in prayer,
And felt a Presence as I prayed.
Lo ! it was Jesus standing there.
He smiled : " BE NOT AFRAID."

" Lord, Thou hast conquered death, we know ;
Restore again to life," I said,
" This one who died an hour ago."
He smiled : " SHE IS NOT DEAD."

" Asleep, then, as Thyself didst say ;
Yet Thou canst lift the lids that keep
Her prisoned eyes from ours away."
He smiled : " SHE DOETH NOT SLEEP."

" Nay, then, tho' haply she do wake,
And look upon some fairer dawn,
Restore her to our hearts that ache."
He smiled : " SHE IS NOT GONE."

" Alas ! too well we know our loss,
Nor hope again to feel that breath
Till we ourselves the river cross."
He smiled : " THERE IS NO DEATH."

" Yet our beloved seem so far,
The while we yearn to see them near,
Albeit with Thee we trust they are."
He smiled : " AND I AM HERE."

" Dear Lord, how shall we know that they
Still walk unseen with us and Thee.
Nor sleep, nor wander far away ? "
He smiled : " ABIDE IN ME."

Rossiter Raymond.

THERE IS NO DEATH

Heimweh.

“Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I flee away, and be at rest.”—Ps. 55. 6.

THE subject which has occupied our attention during Lent, and which I adopted by request, namely, “After death —what?” has obviously initiated in some hearts that yearning which finds utterance in the poetic outburst of David, “Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I flee away, and be at rest.”

Many questions have come to me; to some there is no answer, they belong to “the secret things of the Lord our God”; but I may

say that, in my opinion, the longing to pass over into the spirit sphere of being, which passing over we call dying, is perfectly legitimate, provided that it is serious, unemotional, deliberate, and that it does not imply a cowardly abandonment of obvious duty, or a morbid dissatisfaction with our Father's arrangement of our human lives. The longing is really instinctive, automatic, hereditary ; it is the "heimweh," the home-sickness of the immortal spirit, which has come from God and yearns to go back to God, for "never the spirit was born, the spirit will cease to be never."

The spirit of man at school in the body is like a bird in a cage, or a bird whose wings are temporarily disabled. All who have loved and kept birds know how at a certain season in the year our British song-birds, imprisoned that they may contribute to our pleasure, become restless, wakeful, often beating against the bars of their cage, their power of song seems for the time paralysed,

and there is a far-off yearning look in their eyes. It is the consciousness they possess of the approach of the annual season of migration, when the implanted instinct awakens within them the longing to leave the wintry shores of England for the land of song in the sunny South.

In the awakened spirit of man, conscious of a citizenship, a home, in a higher, more ethereal condition, a home to which perhaps the heart's treasure has already gone, the subject "after death—what?" stimulates some such instinctive, almost undefined longings as those which exist in the migratory bird. The thought was clearly in the mind of the Psalmist when he wrote, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I flee away, and be at rest," and I think it was often in the mind of St. Paul. The wings of his spirit were beating against the cage bars of his body, yearning for the expanded powers, the larger activities of the spirit world, when he wrote, "I desire there-

fore to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.”

It is probably to awaken and to stimulate this cage-bird yearning that is dormant within every one of us, and which is kept dormant by the counter instinct of animal vitality, that our Heavenly Father takes from our sight the visible companionship of those loved ones upon whom our happiness has wholly depended, instead of permitting two loving souls to pass over together. We are sure that the spirit-messengers of the God of Love have borne our loved ones to the spotless shore—

“ Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light,
All rapture through and through
In God’s most Holy sight.”

But we are left desolate, and, without desiring rudely to lift one of God’s veils, we yearn intensely for some realizable contact with those who have gone from our sight.

We look upon some portrait of the loved features, and say with Cowper—

“ O that those lips had language,
Life has gone with me but roughly
Since I heard thee last.”

In answer to more than one questioner, let me say that I am well aware that, in certain conditions, visions of the departed, and communications from them to the bereaved, are granted. When Elisha prayed to the Lord that his servant's eyes might be opened, “ the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw ” into the world of spirits. If the Lord opens your eyes, your interior sight, all is well, thank Him and praise Him. But I gravely doubt the advisability of seeking to lift that veil through the ordinary process of a mediumistic séance. Psychic experiments in connection with modern spiritualism are not free from peril, both physically and morally. Apart from trickery and imposture, there are entities—whether merely astral shells,

as Sir Oliver Lodge seems to think, or real spirits not dead to their old associations, and still hankering after the limitations they have left, I know not—but there are objective entities that seem able to manipulate or influence the nerve currents, or magnetic ether, or whatever it is, of persons in the flesh, and being adepts in impersonation, and facile in thought reading, they can deceive the very elect. It is only in full communion with the Supreme the Infinite Mind that it is well to seek mental communion with our loved ones on the other side. The vibrations of the Christ-mind, the Christ-spirit in you, reaches them, influences them, helps them to influence us.

It is my belief, nay, it is my absolute conviction, that the spirits of the beloved departed can and do help us, inspiring us with many a thought, an aspiration, a suggestion otherwise unaccountable. I think Tennyson is right when he imagines a departed spirit saying :—

"Though I cannot speak a word, I shall hearken
what you say,
And be often, often with you when you think me
far away."

Moreover, no sense of the necessary incompleteness of our beloved ones when they were taken from us need mar our assurance of this inspiration, this influence. Around the departure of many dearly loved ones, there lingers a recollection of imperfection, of capacities not yet developed, of powers not yet used, of faults not yet completely corrected, of work left undone. It is an incompleteness of attainment, not an incompleteness of standing. "Ye are complete in Him" is not inconsistent with the cry from the same lips, "The evil that I would not that I do." There was much incompleteness of attainment in that malefactor whom Jesus, with one breath of Royal command, bore with Him, when the gates of Paradise swung open and lifted up their heads that "the King of Glory might come

in." Paradise is the training school for character, progress, development, ripening, and spiritual advancement. In the exigencies of this present life much interruption of communion with God must be inevitable. Living in the region of externals, as we do and must live, appetites, and desires, and necessities, and sympathies, and prejudices hinder complete self-knowledge and knowledge of God, but in Paradise, emancipated from the imperious demands of the body, earth's many voices are dumb, and the Holy Voice alone sounds in the soul. Who can venture to describe the marvellous sensitiveness of a disembodied spirit to all Divine inspiration ? Every beauty of character which we have admired on earth will be there marvellously developed. Every capacity for greatness which we have recognised, even through the veil of the flesh, will be unfolded and perfected. Every minor weakness will be cast away. Mind, heart, will, spirit, hitherto deteriorated by contact with

earth, will be growing purer in the light of Christ's love. It is hardly possible that there can be anyone who has not [some loved one in Paradise. It is no illegitimate exercise of the imagination to train the ear of the soul towards them and suffer their message to lift us from our poor worldly conventional standards as from God's Paradise they breathe their spirit-message to us. And can there be any doubt as to what that message is ? Is it not certain that it is : " Quit you like men, be strong, be patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," and the " coming of the Lord " will be to each one of us the moment, the happy moment, of our death.

It has been suggested, and with some cogency, that as spiritual education is progressive, and as there must be different planes of attainment in our Father's house of many mansions, the loved ones who have entered the higher school before ourselves may have proceeded to some sphere beyond

our reach. I think we need not be rendered anxious by the suggestion ; the spheres of spiritual attainment are not localities but conditions. Dissimilarity of spiritual condition is no hindrance to the fullest intercourse and relationship here, why should it be there ? "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," said the Incarnate Word to the malefactor who had appealed to Him on the Cross. Dissimilarity in spiritual attainment could not be more accentuated than between those two who entered Paradise together.

Now there are two thoughts which seem to me to be appropriate to this act of lifting the spiritual intuitions into the condition or sphere which is above, around, beyond the world of sense, this automatic echo of David's words, "Oh that I had wings like a dove!" The first is that this lofty conviction that we are surrounded by an innumerable cloud of witnesses, that the dear spirits that we have loved are close to us

though not cognizable by the senses, that they are loving us and sympathizing with our weaknesses, should exercise a powerfully restraining influence upon our lives. While they were with us in the body we have often exercised self-control lest we should grieve them ; their spiritual nearness should be at least an equally restraining consideration now. That was a most appropriate and suggestive prayer that was found amongst the papers of the late Prince Imperial, after his death in the Zulu War : “ Grant that there may sink deeper and deeper into my heart the conviction that those who are gone before are witnesses of my actions. My life shall then be worthy to be seen by them all. My innermost thought shall then be such as will never cause me to blush.”

And the second thought which flows naturally from the first is this. The answer to the question “ after death—what ? ” so far as we who are still in the body are concerned, depends wholly upon the answer we are

able to give to another question, namely, "before death—what?" To-day what? This Sunday morning what? If we fall down dead from heart failure before night, how do we stand, should we find ourselves in a "citizenship" we have made familiar? The message to man is "to-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." It is not to find God and to find our real selves in a future world that we are sent into this world, else why send us here? Paul says "some have not the knowledge of God, I speak this to your shame." Why does he say "to your shame"? I suppose he implies that to have no quickened spirit-consciousness, no intuition of God as the immanent Love Spirit, is in some way dishonourable to us as sons of God; and, let me say, it is of immeasurable importance that this deliberate effort of turning the inner man Godward, of purposeful feeling after God, of recognizing that our real self is our spiritual self, should be made while

our mental faculties are unimpaired and our bodily health vigorous. A so-called death-bed repentance is a mere phantom. When severe illness comes the keener spiritual sensibilities are blinded by matter. I say advisedly that one who has never cultivated his God-consciousness when in a normal condition of health will not be able to do it when, in great physical weakness, the claims of his mortal body are most imperious, continuous, and absorbing. The future condition on the other side of death, into which we gaze so eagerly and so longingly when it holds our treasure, will be not a system of external penalties or rewards administered by a despotic ruler, but the automatic expansion under new conditions of the prevailing bent of our present life. The germs of the new, and perhaps more severe, educative training under a changed environment, which some will experience, or of the progressive joy of an ever brighter knowledge of God which will be the reward

of others, are within us now, evolving in one direction or the other, and this evolution is very greatly under our own control. Enlightened minds have always recognized this in every age. The Greek tragedians wrought it into their plays. Dante lights it up with lurid and I think very unjustifiable fire in his *Inferno*; Omar Khayyám, the Persian mystic, expresses it in the words :--

“I sent my Soul through the Invisible
Some letter of that After-life to spell,
And by and by my Soul returned to me,
And answered, I myself am Heaven and Hell.”

Milton utters the same truth almost in the same words. Shakespeare preaches it with inspired conviction in *Macbeth* and *Othello*; and all are but paraphrasing the plain declaration of St. Paul, “Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.”

There is not one of us who does not perceive within himself good and evil, heaven and hell, self and Christ, flesh and spirit, the wholly human and the entirely Divine.

The exertion and the effort required of us for the development of the higher at the expense of the lower, is the measure of our earthly education, and the Father's object in sending us into the earthly life. A man may always know where he is, if he honestly desires it, by unflinchingly ascertaining which set of impulses, in his very inmost self, his true secret self (not his outer show self, which speaks the false and conceals the true), most really dominate his life. Which set of impulses do you imagine most affect actions—those which originate in thought, or those which originate in sensation ? Our Lord answers the question very emphatically in the seventh chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, verse 21. Surely those which originate in thought. Thought is the raw material of action ; identification of thought with the appetites of the body inevitably results in breaches of the moral law ; identification of thought with the Christ within cultivates the mind to right action. Thought

is creative, thoughts are things. What "thought-atmosphere" are we creating around our lives? Our loved ones in the spirit world meet us in our "thought atmosphere." Coarse, angry, vindictive, selfish, worldly thoughts build a barrier between us and the spirits in the unseen world. What proportion of thought, earnest, concentrated, determined thought, do any of us give in the course of twenty-four hours to the revealed mystery of the indwelling Christ, to the Infinite Universal Spirit pulsing through all things, to the soul-subduing pathos of that poem of a life lived by God Incarnate between Bethlehem and Calvary, that we might know the kind of life that He is desiring to live in each one of us now, compared with our anxious planning thoughts for health and pleasure and business? Whatever object has our keenest thought holds our true life. There is no mystery about this aspect of the question. It is an ordinary recognized fact of our

common humanity that strong thinking in a particular direction, concentration of mind upon one line of things, shuts out other sensations, and, when habitual, causes them to wither and die.

A patient, bedridden for years, has been able to rise and walk under the nervous stimulus of a house in flames; the attempt to assassinate King Darius gave sudden speech to his son, who had been dumb from birth; martyrs have sung and laughed while burning at the stake; soldiers shot through the body in the excitement of action have not known that they were wounded; only because intense mental concentration had for the time abstracted attention from the region of sensation. Right thinking is the habit of withdrawing attention from the region of sensation, and it is surely the operation of this principle of mental action that is called by the Christ "seeking first the Kingdom of God," and by St. Paul "coveting earnestly the best gifts." It is

the acquired habit of thinking intensely into God, as the one all-containing Soul, Life, Love, and allying yourself with that thought. "Whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever things are pure," says the Apostle, "think on these things," that is, deliberately adjust your mind to the highest, deliberately disentangle your thoughts from the lowest, and those things that sensualize and materialize your life shall wither, die, and drop away, and barriers between you and the spirit world shall be broken down.

My own many failures would convict me, if I were to imply that this does not necessitate some severe mental effort, or that it is not sometimes only partially successful. The affections, the will, and the understanding must all be enlisted ; but no character can be perfected without strong effort, and after every storm of mental wrestling comes the calm, the great calm which follows His Voice within, saying "peace, be still":—

“ Be still and know that I am God.”

“ Ridge of the mountain wave, lower thy crest,
Wail of Euroclydon, be thou at rest.”

I would therefore suggest to those who desire that the answer to the question “ after death—what ? ” should be immediate conscious union with the beloved, “ loved long since and lost awhile,” that they should earnestly seek the purification of their whole nature ; that they should train the conscious mind into an attitude of habitual and realized union with God ; that they should practise the Presence of God ; that they should definitely cultivate the faculty of spiritual imagination ; that they should often abstract their thoughts from their immediate surroundings and stimulate the sense of the invisible ; that they should force the mind to cross the line that separates them from the world that is beyond the senses, though it is in reality as near to us as the air we breathe ; that they should open

the soul inwardly to the light of God by filling the conscious mind with the conception of the majesty, the helpfulness, the boundlessness of the love that encircles them, and though success will not be immediate, and it may be long before it becomes the normal attitude, life will be brighter, sorrow will be less poignant, Paradise will be nearer, patience will be more habitual, and the conviction will be intensified that every day passed is a long step nearer to the longed-for reunion, when school-time will be over, and we go home to the Father; and my firm conviction is that, at that moment, we shall open our new eyes directly upon our beloved, who will meet us and "receive us into the Eternal tabernacles."

The Transfiguration of the Vile Body.

“ Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself.”—
PHIL. 3. 20.

IT is a vigorous, undoubting, soul-sustaining utterance, full of assurance, full of comfort, “ when our heads are bowed with woe, when our bitter tears o’erflow ” ; it is suggestive of the Divine basis of human existence, calculated to reach to the true inwardness of man’s being, and lift him above the sorrows, disappointments and perplexities of life.

There is infinite suggestiveness in the use of the present tense, “ is ” in heaven,

not "shall be." The use of the present tense differentiates two distinct systems of theology. There is no suggestion here of heaven as wages to be waited for, or as some celestial dividend-day in the dim and distant future, when God's toilers will receive the accumulated earnings for which they have laboured. There is no sanction given here to the inadequate materialistic conception of heaven as a kind of endless transcendentalised oratorio, from the enjoyment of which most human beings are excluded, or an infinitely prolonged celestial idleness. The Apostle is rather leading our thoughts to contemplate the very root of our being, the indwelling Divine Essence whence we originate, the measureless force which pulses in the inmost of our spirit.

"Our citizenship is in heaven." In heaven ! Where then is heaven ? What is heaven ? The countless conventional caricatures of the Christian revelation are mainly to blame for the materialistic literalness of

the interpretations of this thrilling heart word "heaven." The popular Gospel of Salvation from God and not by God, from fire and not through fire, is responsible for inadequate conceptions, of the heaven of which we are citizens. Mark the authoritative unfolding of the true conception of heaven by Our Lord to Nicodemus. He pierces his soul by one mighty word of the Spirit. Nicodemus virtually asks how he is to get to heaven. "Ye must be born from above," is the answer, that is from within, for "the Kingdom of Heaven is within." The word used is "anōthen," it is nearly the same word as that which the Lord uses of Himself and of His pre-natal being, "ouranothen," and the expression, spiritually interpreted, obviously implies that the way to heaven is through heaven, that no man can enter the condition called heaven who has not the heavenly nature awakened within him, and no man could have the heavenly nature awakened within him if it were not already

there, embryonic, potential, in germ ; that just as the rooting, branching powers are infolded in the unlovely motionless seed, waiting to be born from above by the vivifying touch of soil, moisture, and sunshine, so the eternal developments of the Spirit of God are infolded in the human being, awaiting the life-giving touch which shall call them into operative activity.

Underlying this utterance of St. Paul, considered, as I wish to consider it, from the esoteric point of view, I trace :—

(1) An encouragement to continue what in another place he describes as “feeling after God,” which I prefer to call “thinking into God.”

(2) A suggestion as to the strangely complex and puzzling contraries in the nature of man, and,

(3) An assurance of the utter unreality of death, the phenomenon upon which we are accustomed to look as “the King of Terrors.”

(1) An encouragement to continue “feeling after God.” Many hearts in the present day are, I know, “feeling after God.” In this process they are learning constantly to know God better, to find Him nearer, to trust Him more. St. Paul says, “some have not the knowledge of God, I speak this to your shame.” Does not he mean that it is positively dishonourable in a God-inhabited soul not to “feel after and find,” to think into and realize, ever more and more, that infinite Love-Presence which is the inmost vitality of us all? They who are truly “feeling after God,” know that it is only His intense nearness which makes Him remote from observation by the senses; they know that He is not a God far away on a great white throne, but ever present, our “one God, and Father of all, above all, and through all, and in all,” “closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet.” They know that this knowledge of God by “feeling after Him” has no finality, they know

that it is an acquisition, increasing in proportion to receptivity, which has not, and never will have, finality. There are many subjects of knowledge which have finality ; for example, ascertained facts in the material world discovered by the expert or investigator, which enable man to form a right judgment in some of the perplexities of life, these, as they are registered, have finality. And these ascertained facts, whether of physiology, history, mathematics, morals, or politics, are God's truth on this mundane sphere, just because they are true, and they affect the life and purposes of man. But the progressive knowledge of God, which is on the spiritual plane, the intuitive realization of conscious life in God, towards which the soul evolves through all eternity, has no finality. It may be described as an increasing assurance of the truth of certain inferences concerning the generative Love-Spirit called God, which stimulate the inner springs of action and emotion and bind us to

the invisible ; and to this experience there is not, and there never can be, finality. "Feeling after God" is a gradual unfolding of the soul's hidden capacities, as a flower-bud unfolds in the sunshine, accompanied by new and ever enlarging conceptions of the Infinite Originator, with an ever-increasing sense of rest, confidence, and security in the Soul of the universe. This consciousness of non-finality in "feeling after God" has been the experience of all earnest Godward thinkers. They have realized that their conception of the Infinite has constantly deepened and expanded ; their experience has been an unconscious echo of the thought expressed in those lines :—

"God is God from the creation,
Truth alone is man's salvation,
But the God that now you worship
Soon shall be your God no more,
For the soul in its unfolding,
Ever more its thought remoulding,
Learns more truly in its progress
How to love and to adore."

If we have been thinking into God, which is the highest form of spiritual prayer, the God that now we worship differs surprisingly from the earlier conceptions which once satisfied us. God has not changed, it is we who have changed; our spiritual eyes are getting keener; and this enlargement of truth will bring us an ever-increasing inner peace, for upward thought, Godward aspiration, spiritual experience, free the soul from pessimism, check the fire of passion, strengthen the capacity for endurance, elevate the aim and scope of life. It is well to form the habit of reverently thinking into God. It is well to take a short time every day for mental detachment from material things, and mental concentration on God. "Be still and know." Form the habit of blending your conscious mind with the divine substance which is your true being, and old terrifying illusions will fall away. He says, "your citizenship is in heaven," in the spirit sphere, the sphere of reality.

Then let us claim the fulness of our inheritance. Let us say: "though conscious mind may be unable to grasp the boundless conception of an infinite life, I have my share of it. It is "God that worketh in me," the Love Spirit Immanent in the universe has thought me, has expressed Himself in me, and I know He is slowly transmuting the apparent confusion that now perplexes me into the perfect order which He pre-ordained from the first, and therefore "though I am sometimes afraid, yet put I my trust in Him." Then, though what we understand by happiness may be withheld from us, we shall certainly have peace, perfect peace, and peace is better than happiness.

Then (2) I think there is a suggestion as to the strangely complex contradictory nature of man, a solution of the conflict of which we are conscious within us. "Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look for a Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ,

who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself."

"Heaven, from whence we look for a Saviour." What heaven? What Saviour? I am fully aware that the literal interpretation, the surface interpretation of that "from whence," is, from an objective, external, far-distant heaven, somewhere beyond space. It implies the belief in a personal descent into this planet, by a local movement through space, of the historic Christ, the Lord Jesus, to commence a reign on earth. I know that good and earnest souls have held, and do hold this belief; that they anticipate a terrific cosmic catastrophe, in the midst of which the Personal Christ will appear. I can only say that this interpretation is not true to me. I believe the real interpretation to be far deeper, far more personal, far more esoteric. I believe it to be present, not future.

“Heaven, from whence we look for a Saviour.” Where is heaven? How often are we to remind ourselves that “the Kingdom of Heaven is within”; that God is the inmost centre of all things and all men. What can alone change, transfigure this vile body? How is the ugly chrysalis changed into the gorgeous butterfly? Only the uprising within us of the germ of the Christ-nature, the mystic Christ, the Saviour element, the new clothing of the immortal spirit, can transfigure us. This new man is germinally within us now, we have not to wait for it to descend from the clouds; Paul calls it the “Christ in you,” the Christ-nature, which is the attribute of all men and which was objectively manifested in perfection in the Lord Jesus. We have heard it likened to “the wedding garment,” we have heard it called “the armour of God.” Now we have it likened to a “body,” a new body, a pure and glorious body, a non-atomic enswathement of the immortal spirit,

a body like unto His glorious body, and it is to be evolved from the heaven within.

Why does Paul call this body in which we now are a “vile body”? I imagine only to heighten the comparison between it and the glorious body. The body of man, in itself, is not vile; it is an amazing work of the Creative Spirit, the Logos, “without whom was not anything made that was made,” working in matter. These bodies of ours were constructed by the indwelling Logos before we were conscious; divine creative power was at work weaving our bodies several months before we entered this world. Wondrous intelligence was at work building these homes, these flesh houses, in which the real ego was to go to school, long before we knew anything about it; they are only “vile” by comparison with the glorious Shekinah, the immortal treasure which they contain. Possibly also “vile,” in the opinion of St. Paul, because of their pre-ordained function of virtually resisting

the evolution of the divine Christ-life they contain ; the flesh resisting the spirit. There are two lives within us : the “Race-life,” which is the flesh ; and the “God-life,” which is the spirit ; and it is fully in accordance with St. Paul’s attitude to call the flesh life “vile.” St. Paul is full of this thought of the existence of extreme opposites in our construction. He carries it even to what sounds like an exaggeration when he affirms that if he does wrong, it is not he, not the real man, who does the wrong, but “sin that dwelleth in him.”

Now, granted that St. Paul is revealing the secret of our ideal humanity, it is from the heaven within that we are to look for this “Saviour Christ who will change this vile body.” It is not by yearning mental concentration upon the future descent from a distant heaven of a Divine Healer that we are to be changed, while generation after generation of human beings continue unchanged. The whole of the occult saying

that I have quoted is in the present tense. It is for us to believe, and to affirm with all our strength, that the Mystic Christ within, the vital reality of our being, which is the God dwelling within us, is now, to-day, at this moment, yearning to become a recognized, kindled power in the soul ; longing to build us up, to clothe us with the new body, "like unto His glorious body" ; to make us gradually new men and new women, not by destroying the flesh nature, but by absorbing it, "making of the twain one new man and so making peace," and this is the at-one-
ment.]

What can we do to co-operate with this "Saviour-Christ-nature" dwelling in the heaven within ? We can do this : we can assiduously practise ourselves in the conviction that our higher inner consciousness is the life of God within us, the type which was manifested in perfection in the historic Lord Jesus Christ. We can remember that time is not running out for us into anni-

hilation but into development. We can say to ourselves in moments of silent meditation, "I live because God lives." We can practise thinking of ourselves as spirit and not as flesh, and while not despising the "vile body," inasmuch as that also has been thought into being by the Omniscient Father, we can avoid concentrating thought on the body. "Take no thought for your body," said the Lord; in other words, "do not be centred on it." And we can jealously strive to make our bodies pure dwelling-places for the Holy Spirit, the true spiritual ego, the ideal humanity, remembering Paul's words, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

Then, thirdly, I said that this powerful declaration in the immortal literature conveyed an assurance of the unreality of death. It is easy to talk about the unreality of death, but is death unreal? Death, in human experience, is a fact, and every ascertained

fact is an actuality compelling recognition. Death is a real fact, every circumstance connected with which is abhorrent in the extreme. Helplessly to watch death slowly shrouding with its cold veil the features of some dearly loved one, like as the shadow slowly passes over the face of the sun at a time of total eclipse, is the most heart-breaking trial to which love can be exposed ; and yet, in the light of this truth of the indwelling of the Christ type, the divine immortal ego, of the essential inseverability of God and man, " there is no death, what seems so is transition." When Jesus said " I am the resurrection and the life," His words had a deeper application than to His glorious power as the objective God-filled manifestation of the Absolute. His words extend to the indwelling divine nature in all men of which He was the perfect specimen. He, the Christ in man, our share of the Logos of God, is the resurrection and the life in each one of us ; the life-germ in

every grain of wheat might say “ I am the resurrection and the life ” of this seed. We only hate and fear death because our conceptions of life have necessarily been so closely connected with the body. Life, real life, is spirit ; real life never dies :—

“ Never the spirit was born ;
The spirit shall cease to be never ;
Never was time it was not ;
End and beginning are dreams.
Birthless and deathless and changeless
Remaineth the spirit for ever ;
Death hath not touched it at all,
Dead though the house of it seems ”—

only the external self dies ; the Jews killed the external self of the Christ, they could not touch His real life. As the book of Wisdom says : “ the souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, in the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, but they are in peace.” The real citizenship of that one, who, to our un-wisdom, seemed to die, and to witness whose seeming death was a veritable hell of an-

guish, is in God ; in God to whom there is no beginning ; and the scope of that life is in God's Eternity to which there is no ending. " Peace, Peace, he is not dead, he doth not sleep, he hath awakened from the dream of life."

Let us cultivate the assurance that there is no death. Let us believe that they who have gone before, though we miss their dear forms more and more as time goes on, are living, and loving, and watching, and waiting for us. Let us lift the conscious mind, over the narrow threshold, into the citizenship where our beloved are, and while thus seeking communion of spirit with spirit, patiently continue to do our duty here " until the day break " (the happy day of our own release)—" and the shadows " (the shadows of earthly limitations) " flee away."

“Beholding” and “Seeing.”

“I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice.”
—ST. JOHN 16. 22.

IT is one of the recorded farewells of the perfect Representative of the Race, a clear recognition of the intensity of the bond that unites loving human hearts, and a promise that those bonds shall not be weakened, but rather intensified, by the departure of a loved visible presence. I am convinced that He spoke those words not independently, but as the representative of man, and that we are justified in appropriating them, universalizing them, and imagining that they are spoken to every mourner by a beloved one passing out of sight.

Are we clear about the representative

character of the Lord Jesus ? do we accept the axiom that He is not only the perfect Incarnation of the nature of God, but also the ideal man ? Have we cleared confusion from our minds as to His position with regard to the Infinite Originator on the one hand, and to humanity as a whole on the other ?

I do not mean that we, with finite minds, can comprehend the secret how God and matter blend, how spirit and flesh are interspersed. Into the interior relations between the Absolute, and the highest manifestation of the Absolute, no mortal understanding can penetrate ; but neither do I understand how my thought of myself is different from myself and yet one with myself. But there are certain lines of thought which we can follow without baffling reason or contradicting logic. St. Paul starts us on the track for right thinking when he says, in Romans 1. 20, that " the invisible things of God are perceived through the things that are made " ; in other words, that he who will " ascend

the altar stairs of things created" will find that "they slope through darkness up to God." He who ascends those altar stairs finds the universe full of plan: plan implies thought, thought necessitates a thinker, therefore all has proceeded from an unoriginated Thinker, a transcendental mind, or imagination, who makes things to be by thinking them; and, to use language which certainly would have been intelligible to Plato: God is the originating Thinker. God's thought of Himself is the Logos; when He thinks that thought it becomes differentiated into the phenomena of the universe and into man. The most transcendent thought of God is the Archetypal man, the perfect man, the man Christ Jesus. Therefore the man Christ Jesus is, in one aspect, the most perfect thought of God, and so God-inhabited that we may render to Him divine worship without disloyalty to the Universal Soul; and, in the other aspect, He is the complete and ideal Incarnation of that em-

bodied Logos or thought of God which is the attribute of humanity as a whole. Therefore the distinction between the Lord Jesus and His brethren of the human race is a distinction not in kind but in degree; a degree obviously so vast as almost to amount to a distinction in kind, but not sufficient to deter St. John from uttering those remarkable words, "As He is so are we in this world," or St. Paul from saying that we are "joint-heirs" with the Christ. It is therefore as the Representative of the human race as a whole, and of each separate item of the human race as a differentiated individuality, that He speaks those words of farewell and promise, when passing from one dimension of space to another, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice."

Now if any would desire to appropriate these words as spoken to them directly by a loved one from the other world, let them consider what is the force of that expression "see," "I will see you." Does it mean

that spirits in the other world see us, and we are to see them, with these bodily eyes, the eyes that we now possess ; or does it refer to a sight that reaches to that which is beyond the senses, a spiritual sight, an illumination of the intuitive faculty far higher than anything that Nature can provide ?

I believe the answer lies in the special teaching of the gospel for the third Sunday after Easter, where two distinct Greek words are used for “ seeing,” though translated into the same English word. I have repeatedly spoken of this distinction, and I call attention to it again because it unveils an important truth. Our Lord is reported, in the sixteenth verse, according to the Authorised Version, to have said, “ a little while and ye *see* Me no more, again a little while and ye shall *see* Me.” The words illustrate the characteristic teaching of the forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension of the Christ, and that teaching is the nearness, the helpfulness, the accessibility of

the Universal Soul as manifested in its integrity and completeness in Jesus Christ ; but it must surely be of set purpose, of deliberate intention, as a stimulus to the thought and imagination of the hearer and reader, that two Greek words capable of an important distinction of meaning are used here in the same sentence for " seeing." The distinction is ignored in the Authorised Version of the New Testament, and only partly suggested in the Revised Version in the translation, " a little while and ye ' behold ' Me no more, again a little while and ye shall ' see ' Me." The word theorite, the first word translated " behold," refers to physical sight depending on the bodily organs ; the word theorem, something to be mechanically proved, is derived from this Greek word. The word opsesthe, the second word translated " see," refers to perception independent of the bodily organs. It is used of the insight of the metaphysician, of the spiritual vision of the believer, of

the impressions of the genuine clairvoyant, of the awakened intuitions of the mystic, which enable him to penetrate beyond the veil of the world of sense and see that which is invisible. Sophocles in the *Oedipus* constantly uses this second word, *opsesthe*, of mental vision, and it is used in the New Testament more than thirty times of spiritual sight as opposed to bodily vision. Our Lord's words then, which apparently were misunderstood by the disciples who heard them, emphasized the contrast between the two worlds of sense and spirit, upon the boundaries of which He was, as it were, hovering and lingering during the forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension. Paraphrased, they would signify "In a short time My bodily presence, which has been clear to you, which you have beheld with your physical eyes, which your hands have handled, shall pass from your sight, but soon, after a brief period, during which you shall 'weep and lament,' you

shall receive a gift which shall awaken within you spiritual sight, and under the illuminating touch of the Pentecostal afflatus a recognition of My nearness shall break in upon your hearts which shall fill you with undaunted courage and with fearless rest, for you shall ‘see’ Me in a new way, you shall be intuitively conscious of the thrilling touch of My Presence, you shall be so penetrated by its reality that it shall transfigure your lives, regenerate your nature, drive away your fears, empower you with such missionary enthusiasm that as My representatives you shall move the world.” “Out of weakness you shall be made strong, you shall quench the violence of fire, stop the mouths of lions, put to flight the armies of the aliens and endure as seeing Me though invisible.”

They did not understand ; they had not yet discovered, in the teacher whom they loved, the interpretation of the secret of humanity ; they were at the time material-

istic Deists under the influence of a fascinating Prophet; their highest aspirations reached no further than to seats on the right hand and on the left in an earthly kingdom; they murmured one to another, “What is this that He sayeth?” and it required all those abnormal appearances, materializations, apparitions of the forty days, to lift them from their surface-plane of perception. With infinite patience the Lord gradually accustomed them to recognize the fact of a universally diffused, invisible Presence; leading them on from theorite to opsesthe step by step; appearing and disappearing; till they learnt to know that the viewless air around them held the mysterious Presence of the Word of the Father, the Eternal Logos, or Reason, of the Universal Soul, the humanity of God, as an all-pervading Individuality, in, and yet not identified with, the universe which expresses and manifests Him; and when the lesson was learnt, when they had got

clear of the tyranny of the senses, when with awakened intuitions and not with bodily eyes they saw Him "closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet," all that was implied in the word opsesthe was fulfilled ; they worked and preached and lived and died, speaking that they did know, and testifying that they had seen.

Now so far as the realization of the Presence of the Lord is concerned there is of course a broad distinction between our position and that of the disciples to whom the words were spoken. There is with us no memory on the plane of the visible to be obliterated as in the case of our loved departed. We have never " beheld " Jesus in the sense of the word theorite ; there is no tender human recollection of Him from which we have to be weaned. We have entered the world in the dispensation of that second word, opsesthe ; but the distinction indicated between the two words emphasizes powerfully the master-secret of

human life. This lingering of the elder Brother of the race in the world of sense, this passing to and fro from one dimension to another, this encouragement mentally to reach into another and higher sphere of being, all indicate that we humans are living in two worlds at one and the same time; that human individuality includes a dual consciousness, a self-consciousness which is related to time and space, and a profounder self-consciousness, possessing higher powers than our normal self-consciousness, which links us to universal life, reaches to that which is beyond the senses, and apprehends the world of spirits, the loved ones who have left the flesh life, with a certainty far stronger than physical sight and natural reason. Swedenborg was right when he said man is so constituted that he is at the same time in the spirit world and in the natural world, and he was but echoing the words of St. Paul, “your life,” that is your true being, your inmost ego, “is hid with

Christ in God." The two Greek words referred to indicate that to this twofold life, this dual human nature, there belong two distinct methods of vision, two separate faculties each of which may be called "seeing." The one, the natural, appertains to the sense-consciousness, it sees through the eyes of the physical body, it comes to conclusions through ordinary experience, and it is the first in manifestation in the human animal. The other, the spiritual, is the quickening into activity of an inward vision which penetrates into a higher sphere; it is an insight into supersensuous realities. It cannot be placed under the limitation of a definition, and inasmuch as its place in any metaphysical classification is so vague, it is not easy to give it a name; but it is that endowment bestowed potentially, germinally, on every one born into the world, and best described by the word intuition. Though this intuitive faculty when fully awakened takes possession of the whole of

a man, and penetrates, leavens, sanctifies all the faculties on the other plane of being, these two methods of sight operate in different spheres, and are placed by St. Paul in the strongest contrast. "The natural man," he says, "perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God because they are spiritually discerned."

The "natural" man, the human mind on the plane of the word theorite, is not to be despised or considered an illusion; it has its great use in establishing religious convictions; it has dealt powerfully with the evidential theology of the Church, it has proved that Deism is more rational than Atheism; it is rapidly abolishing materialism in its coarsest sense; but when objects are removed from its sight its function ceases, it moves no step beyond logical and tangible demonstration, and accepts nothing that cannot be framed into a syllogism. Spiritual sight, on the other hand, has a sphere of its own; facts

are recognized by it that the conscious mind knows not; truths are seen by it that are invisible to the strongest brain; a knowledge is possessed by it which makes the wisdom of the world but folly.

A proof of the superiority of this intuitive vision, and its independence of the natural faculties, has often been afforded in the case of persons to whom physical sight was wholly wanting. I have an affectionate remembrance of an aged, totally blind parishioner, whose spiritual intuitions were keenly sensitive. I once took a friend to visit him who said to him, "How glorious it will be for you when you pass out of the body, you will see Jesus." He replied with intense conviction, "But I do see Him now." And I am sure he did, in the sense of "opsesthe," not of "theorite."

Now this contrast between natural sight and spiritual vision, this wide distinction, almost contradiction, between the two Greek words each translated "see," indicate to

my own mind the nature of the communion we should seek with those in the spirit world. It is full of significance that our Lord, when He said “I will *see* you again,” used the second of these words, the spiritual word. He said *opsomai*, clearly proving that He did not refer to those exceptional materializations of Himself which He vouchsafed, for a special purpose, during the forty days, and that those materializations cannot be quoted as affording a precedent or justification for the phenomena produced at an ordinary mediumistic séance. Those appearances at séances, whatever they are, come under the first word, the material word theorite, not under the spiritual word *opsesthe*. In spite of much imposture it is not possible to deny the reality and objectivity of many of these, abnormal, phenomena; but, whatever these manifestations may be, the fact of their becoming visible, audible, tangible is proof that they are in, or have been drawn by the medium into,

the region of the word theorite; they are in matter, and apart from the haunting uncertainty as to whether these entities are truly the persons they assume to be, there are undoubted dangers connected with the practice. The most remarkable medium I ever knew was the Rev. Stainton Moses, a clergyman in my father's diocese of Oxford. He said, "These communications are generally marked by evidences of intellectual weakness, and it is, *prima facie*, extremely unlikely that the spirits of the noble, the learned and the pure should be concerned in the production of physical and intellectual phenomena which, when not silly, are frequently mischievous; the voice from beyond the grave is uncertain, and, when it can be tested, frequently delusive if not absolutely and mischievously false."

No, I believe that we see our beloved in spirit life, and they see us in the sense of that second Greek word, opsesthe, and that the acquired habit of thinking into the

spirit world, of pressing the normal consciousness beyond the threshold of the senses into the other sphere is of infinite value to us; it teaches us “to fix our gaze above the world’s uncertain haze.” I would suggest, if you would seek communion with one “loved long since and lost awhile,” that, instead of going to a séance, you should put aside a quiet time to place yourself into a mental attitude of thought-concentration. Think yourself into a consciousness of the Presence of God. “Be still and *know*” that you are alone with God; then, as you suffer no other image to enter your mind, make an affirmation, “God whose name is Love is the all, the only substance; whoever mentally touches God touches the all, for at the centre of the being of all, in whatever world they are, is God.” In that attitude your mind is functioning for the time wholly from the spirit, the Christ mind which Paul says we all have. Then, if you will repeat the name of that one in spirit-life whom

you want, and breathe to God a desire for that one, “Abba Father, may the vibrations of my love reach that dear spirit, and grant to that one advancement and happiness and close union with me,” then address the dear spirit directly, say what you will. Do you doubt for a moment that you two are then mentally and spiritually blended? Why, even in these earth limitations it has been proved that thoughts from the mind of one can be conveyed to the mind of another; how much keener and more penetrating must be the mental powers of those who love us and who are no longer hampered by the physical body.

I am certain—yes, I may say now I am *certain*—that the spirit-being we love and whom we have thus invoked is able to help, quicken, illumine, and console us; and, though visibly and audibly unmanifested, we may be sure they are saying to us, in the very words of our Lord’s farewell promise, “I WILL SEE YOU AGAIN, AND YOUR HEART SHALL REJOICE.”

The Souls of the Righteous.

“The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them; in the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, but they are in peace.”—WISDOM 3. 1.

THIS is God’s answer to every bereaved heart, yearning for a departed visible presence, and half doubtfully exclaiming—

“Can a finite thing, created in the bounds of time and space,
Can it live and grow and love Thee, catch the glory
of Thy face,
Fade and die, begone for ever, know no being, have
no place ? ”

The Originating Spirit answers clearly, authoritatively—

“In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, but they are in peace.”

The nothingness of death, and indestructible personal identity, are the thoughts for

All Saints, and each one applies the thoughts, first, to the being and condition of those whom they have themselves seen pass away from vision and their place know them no more. How we grieved, how we wept, but we were "the unwise," and in the sight of us, the unwise, "they seemed to die, but they are in peace." Communion of spirit with them is an essential reality. I do not mean by séances and mediums and psychometric clairvoyants and the rest. Without denying the reality of some at any rate of these psychic phenomena, the practice is so smothered in fraud, and the intelligences that seem to communicate are so apt at impersonation, and the communications are as a rule so trivial and uninforming, that the highest demands of love are not fully satisfied. The real guarantee of communion of spirit with the departed is the common possession of the indestructible life of God. Though indefinable, as being the passage of brain waves, this communion is through thought, winged by love, and

spiritualized by intense believing communion with Infinite Spirit. God is love, and love is God, and love that has been welded and intensified by the simultaneous passage of hearts, for many years, through the educative experiences of this earth life, is as immortal as God, indeed it is a quality of God, and "the gates of Hades cannot prevail against it." It is a joy to be assured of the inseverability of spirits bound together by love, to be convinced that they who loved us on earth are able now, in their higher conditions, in their fuller, freer, completer life, to be near to us and to breathe into us helpful quickening influences. I believe it, nay, I know it. It is now well recognized that mind can act powerfully on mind, here on earth, irrespective of space and time. It is illogical to limit that thought-power to the earth sphere.

"Star to star vibrates light,
So may soul to soul pierce through a finer element
of its own."

Of course the question arises—But what

of the souls of the unrighteous, where are they? Equally in the hands of God, for "all live unto Him," and God is love. Many pass over in incompleteness, with capacities undeveloped, powers not yet called into exercise, faults not yet corrected. It is our duty to help them. The supreme penetrating force of helpful healing thoughts reaches them. We can, with humane purpose, with Divine aim, project ourselves mentally into the condition where they are, and, identifying ourselves with them, set free towards them Divine influences which would not be set free in the same way if we did not claim for them the Divine inheritance they have not yet faith to claim for themselves.

"Still thy love, O Christ arisen,
Yearns to reach these souls in prison."

And our mental concentration is one of the means through which the Christ Spirit is able to reach them, for it is the Christ in us that is seeking them. The heart of one who is manifesting the Christ within cries—

“ How can I cease to pray for thee ? Somewhere
In God’s great Universe thou art to-day.
Can He not reach thee with His tender care ?
Can He not hear me when for thee I pray ? ”

Love is stronger than death, and it is stronger than theological limitations. Tennyson was voicing a high and noble instinct of humanity when he wrote—

“ Pray for my soul, more things are wrought
By prayer than this world dreams of.”

“ Believest thou this ? ” as our Lord said to Martha. Recently I was confronted with one who utterly disbelieves in immortality. “ Prove it to me,” it was said. You can’t prove that which you see luminously. A blind man might say “ prove to me that the sun shines.” Spiritual consciousness makes one see, as clearly as one sees the sun, that there is no death, that sundered souls will be reunited in the life of the other world. And this knowledge gives us patience to “ wait but a little while in uncomplaining love,” but you can’t prove it.

I wish I could prove it to mourners who

are unable to attain to it, for their condition is pitiable. They have laid a loved body in the grave—

“ Before decay’s effacing fingers

Have marred the lines where beauty lingers,”

and silence, hopeless silence, has dropped its impenetrable veil between them, and the old question in the book of Job, “ if a man die shall he live again ? ” torments them with a bitterness in proportion to their human love. You cannot prove immortality, but surely there is a basis for the belief which ought to convince anyone who will think. Of course in drawing the inference we have to use phraseology which is inadequate, and you can stop the argument at once by insisting on analytical definition. For example, the very word “immortality” is vague, the human mind cannot conceive either never beginning or never ending, and the word “immortality” is after all merely a negation. Even terms that are not negations are insufficient, it is spoken of as Eternal life, aeonian life, the

life of the ages, the life of the world to come, and so on. Again the expression "life" has no definition. No pathologist or psychologist can present you with a formula which is an analysis of life, vegetable, animal, or human. "Correspondence with environment," says one. "The sum and product of the forces that resist death," says another. The definition given by St. James is equally untenable; he speaks of life as "a vapour that appeareth for a little while and then vanishes away." This is as purely materialistic as the beautiful metaphor of Shelley—

"Life, like a dome of many coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity
Until death tramples it to fragments."

Moreover, St. James' definition savours of Pantheism, for vapour is precipitation into visibility of all-pervading moisture, and when again resolved, that vapour is lost, the same vapour never again appears. A well-taught Brahmin will teach you more than this; he knows that Nirvana is not absorption into the torrent of universal life,

which is virtually annihilation, but conscious identification with universal life without the loss of your own sense of individuality. The fact is we don't need definitions. We know.

Yes, we know. But if you were trying to enlighten my questioner, how would you do it? You would probably begin by pointing out that the main arguments for continuity of individuality after physical death may be summarized under three heads: (1) Instinct. (2) Metaphysics. (3) Justice.

The first is the universality of the instinct. No race, not even primitive fetish worshippers and animists, believed death to be extinction. Descartes, one of the greatest of the world's philosophers, argues that the universality of an instinct justifies belief in that to which the instinct points. Plato, in the Phaedo, describes the debate amongst the philosophers of Greece, whether the relation of soul to body was that of harmony to a harp or of a rower to a boat. According to the first, the music must cease when the harp is broken. According to the latter,

the rudder may survive when the boat is wrecked, and the whole testimony of the Greek Tragedians proves that the latter was the accepted theory. It is an illustration of the universality of the instinct, as Addison says, in the oft-quoted words in *Cato's Will*, p. 100—

It must be so; Else, how swimmen well,
Else whence the pleasing hope, this float sense
This longing after immortality?
Or whence that secret dread and inward horror
Of falling into nothing? Why shuns the soul
Bank on hazard, and scards at destruction?
Tis the Divinity that thus abhors us,
Tis heaven itself that abhors immortality in man.

The metaphysical argument, of which Leibnitz is the main exponent, is based upon the alleged indestructibility of an uncompounded essence. He taught that the ego of man was a substance, *ousia*, and that no substance, *ousia*, could perish except by the miracle of annihilation.

The moral argument is that which has perhaps weighed most with thinking men. It was used by Goethe, it is expressed by

Tennyson; it is that the innate sense of justice in man refuses to believe that death will put an end to a development hitherto uninterrupted, and so make impossible the rectification of balances notoriously unequal in this life. Tennyson says—

“Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die,
And Thou has made him,
Thou art just.”

But there is an argument for immortality which does not depend on instinct, or speculation, or justice, and which, in my opinion, establishes its thesis on a firmer base even than scientific evidence, for even if science became satisfied with the evidences of so-called spiritualism, it would not have proved individual immortality. The apparent intelligences who manifest at séances may be only astral doubles on their way to dissolution and not individuals at all. The argument for immortality which has always seemed to me to be unanswerable lies in the recognition of the Originating Life-

Principle as Infinite Mind. The initial movement which began to concentrate the world out of the particles of dispersed ether must have been the Creative Imagination of an Infinite Mind. The production of individual centres of intelligent life became a necessity of the Originating Mind for the realization of its own being and qualities, and of these centres man is the highest. Therefore man, in his inmost nature, is the product of the Divine Mind imaging forth an image of itself on the plane of the relative. Man is therefore a thought of God, and his real being, his inmost self, his individuality, whether he knows it or not, is for ever and ever a fact in the Divine mind, wholly apart from its external form. I find that metaphysical thinkers almost always use the same analogy. Generally it is that of the Painter or Sculptor. To me the analogy of the Architect is the clearest. The Architect designs a building, his imagination is creative, he thinks out all the details in his mind until he has the complete and finished

structure in his mind's eye. He utters his thought on paper, it becomes verbum, the word. In course of time, through processes involving labour and delay, his thought becomes bricks and mortar and dwells among us, and the edifice is completed. Now it is obvious that the reality of that building is not in its external form, in the bricks and mortar, it is in the mind of the Architect; he has thought it, as a complete whole, he cannot unthink it. It may be destroyed, its material visible manifestation may be shattered by an earthquake, or burnt down. But the true being of that building, complete in every detail, lives irrevocably, perfectly, in the Architect's mind. If advisable to reconstruct it in a material sense, it can at any moment be reproduced in every detail; the building is "predestined to be conformed" to the ideal image in the mind of the author. Here lies the irrefragable philosophic basis of human immortality. "The builder and maker of all things is God." Not the

objective mechanical engineer of Deism, not the vague cosmic impulse of Pantheism or Monism. But God as Immanent Infinite Mind, imaging forth vehicles, life-centres, under the necessity for self-expression, self-realization and self-manifestation of that which He feels to be involved in Himself. The problem of life is solved for one who thus perceives the true relation between man and the Originating Spirit. Humanity is a mode of God's thinking, each human being is an idea in the mind of God. Before differentiating Himself into each separate individual life-centre He has seen each one complete, as he will be in the end, as He thought him from the beginning. He can never unthink him, He can never, so to speak, obliterate from the Infinite Mind that completed ideal that He has thought. So long as God lives, man lives; Man is immortal because God is immortal. Our outer visible manifestation may be shattered, our refusal to allow Infinite Spirit to realize Himself in us may necessitate the passage of aeons

to complete us, but, in God's mind, we are always as He designed us. "In Him we live and move and have our being," therefore "In the knowledge of God," not only in our knowledge of Him that is half the truth, but also in His knowledge of us, "standeth our Eternal life." Whether in conditioned States, or in Hades, or in Gehenna, or in Paradise, or in Heaven, each one has his Eternal being, his true self, in God, from whom into outer consciousness he has come, and to whom he must return in the atonement, or reconciliation of outward states to inmost being. "Creation" has reference not to man as he is in God, but to the state of subjection, limitation and educative illusion, the state that St. Paul calls "vanity," to which man has been "made subject not willingly but by reason of God," and which conceals his true nature until he is "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of sonship."

This being so, it seems to me that no

true thinker, without committing himself to the materialistic absurdity that there is no Originating Mind, and that the unconscious has produced the conscious, can deny personal immortality, and Carlyle was right when he said, "the real being of whatever was, and is, and will be, is even now, and for ever, believe it thou must."

So we may say of our beloved, "in the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, but they are in peace." In peace, in the condition called Paradise, waiting for us, for, as the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "they, without us, cannot be made perfect," but in peace. In peace from the claims of the body, in peace from the cares and infirmities and misunderstandings of this unrestful life. There every beauty of character that we have loved is being developed, every capacity for greatness is being unfolded and perfected, every weakness cast aside, and our communion with them, and our self-preparation for reunion, will not be by urging them to materialize in thought-forms into the chok-

ing atmosphere of earth conditions at the bidding of some medium, but by a definite increase of our own God-consciousness, by an ever-growing conviction that real life is spirit not body, by thinking of our beloved as what they are, individual thoughts of God discarnate, by forcing our minds out of these perishable, changeable conditions into the peace of the Presence; and when we concentrate all thought upon Infinite Spirit, and consciously include in the thought the one special individualization whom we have known and loved, that one is actually blended with us, we are one with them and they with us.

The motto of a life preparing to be with the beloved where they are, is—

“Think truly, and thy thoughts shall the world’s famine feed.

Speak truly, and each word of thine shall be a fruitful seed.

Live truly, and thy life shall be a great and noble creed.”

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